

moves on after years of outstanding service to the Congress. We are grateful for that service, and we wish him the best in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING BELLE LIKOVER

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this week, the city I call home lost a great Ohioan, and Connie and I lost a friend, Belle Likover of Shaker Heights. Belle passed away at age 97, and over her extraordinary life, she saw the creation of our country's greatest social insurance programs: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—and fought to protect those lifelines for American seniors.

Ms. Likover was born the same year as my mother and grew up in Beaver Falls, PA. She remembered her childhood as a happy one, with one big exception: the Great Depression. In an interview several years ago, she talked about the lasting effects those memories had on her, saying, "We saw everybody else suffer. I remember the shantytowns. I remember people living in what used to be packing crates. There was a constant stream of people who came to our backdoor for food. My mother never turned anybody away."

Those experiences would shape her activism throughout her life. In high school and later in college, at the Ohio State University, she said she was "never bashful about speaking out." She joined the high school varsity debate team as a sophomore, as the only girl on the team, and learned how to marshal an argument. She told an interviewer that, "Every position of leadership I've had, I owe to that debate coach."

In college, she put that training to use, first getting involved in political causes in 1937, when she and a friend helped organize an antifascist group at Ohio State. They saw what was happening in Germany and across Europe and how dangerous that was for the world.

Growing up in that time of turmoil and as a woman at a time when her abilities would be constantly questioned, Belle faced setbacks. As a child, she asked for chemistry sets instead of dolls, but in college, a chemistry professor told her, "If you want a Ph.D., you better marry one." Her first husband laid down his life for our country during World War II, leaving Ms. Likover with a newborn daughter to raise.

She published papers without the Ph.D. that her male peers had and worked at the Cleveland Jewish Community Center's senior department, where she saw what a difference Social Security made in the lives of the elderly—and later how Medicaid and Medicare would change their lives. She went to grad school on a JCC scholarship.

Throughout the years, she never ceased in her activism. She joined me

at events many times to talk about the importance of Medicare. I interviewed Belle in the summer of 2015, marking the 50th anniversary of the passage of Medicare and Medicaid. She told me she was thrilled when it passed because she remembered how poor older people were when she was growing up—"They didn't have Medicare, they ended up in poorhouses," she told me. And she added, "Do you know how many people can't wait until they're 65 to get covered by Medicare?"

Just last fall, she joined us on a call with Ohio reporters to talk about how devastating it would be to raise the retirement age. That was Belle Likover—an activist and advocate, full of compassion but never bashful, all the way through age 97. Our family's thoughts and prayers are with Belle's loved ones. We will miss her, and we will strive to carry on her advocacy for Ohio seniors.●

TRIBUTE TO ERNEST "ERNIE" GRECCO

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I would like to congratulate a dear friend of mine, Mr. Ernest "Ernie" Grecco, for 55 years of dedicated service to the labor movement and to working men and women and their families in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area and across the Nation. Ernie recently retired after serving for 20 years as president of the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO Council, which covers Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard Counties. For the last 15 years, he also served as secretary on the board of directors of the United Way of Central Maryland. Ernie's vocation and his avocation have been to make life better for other people. There is an old saying, "You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give." Ernie has given so much to so many for so long. It is why I feel privileged and proud to call him my friend.

Ernie became involved in the labor movement in 1962 while he was working at Calvert Distilleries. He was a member of Distillery Workers Union Local 34 and was elected shop steward. He served as shop steward until 1970, when he was elected secretary-treasurer of Local 34-D. He also served as trustee of the Distillery Workers International Union.

In 1973, then-President Nick Fornaro of the Baltimore Central Labor Council hired Ernie as a job placement officer for the Institutional Training Project. In this capacity, Ernie was responsible for helping find jobs for hundreds of men and women housed at the Jessup and Hagerstown Penal Institutions who were qualified for work-release status. In 1976, he became the director of the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO Council's Committee on Political Education, COPE. He served in this position until 1983 when he became the COP director for the Maryland State

and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. He was elected to serve as president of the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO Council in 1987, and he also served as first vice president of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO.

Ernie has held many other leadership positions over the course of his illustrious career. For instance, he chaired the Young Trade Unionists, which was created to bring younger people into the labor movement, and he served as president of the Union Label & Service Trades Council, which promoted the purchase of union services and products. Ernie has also served on the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board, the Maryland Transportation Commission, the Maryland Workers Compensation Commission, and the Maryland Racing Commission.

As president of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council, Ernie established monthly meetings with the mayor of Baltimore City to encourage better communications and collaboration between the city and the unions. The committee consists of all city unions and a representative from the building trades. Ernie also championed the council's community services division. The community services division provides assistance to working people through information and referral advocacy to help them solve personal and family crises. The services include education and training for union peer counselors; Baltimore Works, a job placement program for dislocated workers; and Project LEAP, an adult education literacy program.

It should come as no surprise that Ernie has received numerous awards for his indefatigable service to people. He has the distinction of receiving not one, but two, national awards for community service, the Samuel Gompers Award from the American Red Cross in 1991 and the Joseph A. Beirne Award from United Way of America in 1999. Last year, United Way of Central Maryland gave Ernie its Philip H. Van Gelder Award for Community Services. In 1995, the Baltimore City Fire Fighters Local 734 and Baltimore City Fire Officers Local 964 created the Grecco Labor Award to be given to a firefighter who "best exemplifies the continuing and complex efforts of the local union membership to build the relationship between labor and management."

During Ernie's career, he has been much loved and respected not just in Baltimore, but in Annapolis and across the State of Maryland for his steadfast commitment to the labor movement and working people. He is, understandably, an avid Orioles, Ravens, and horse-racing fan. His retirement is bittersweet because his beloved wife Dorothy—"Dot"—recently passed away, but I know Ernie will spend much of his time with his daughter, Nina Grecco Dukes, and his son, Gary, and Gary's wife, Kelly, and his grandchildren, Ashley, Adam, Katy, and Ben.

I have relied on Ernie's sage counsel on labor matters and other issues over